CHAPTER 17 『KUMAMI AND AGARI』

HAA
HAA
HAA
HAH
HAA
HAA
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SOB
SOB
SOB
WHY?
JUST
WHY?

WHY CAN'T I BEAT TSUKI-NOWA-SAN?
JUST WHY?
WHY?
SOB
SOB
WHEN I SEE A-CHAN'S CRYING FACE?
SOB
SOB
WHY DOES MY HEART HAVE TO BEAT SO FAST...

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I'D NEVER PAID IT MUCH ATTENTION, BUT...
YOU CAN SEE YOUR OPPONENT'S EXPRESSION SO WELL WHEN PLAYING PING PONG.
A-CHAN HAS THAT LOSING FACE..
LIKE SHE MIGHT START CRYING ANY TIME.
AND I CAN SEE IT SO CLEARLY.
OH NO.
THAT'S NO GOOD.
IF YOU MAKE THAT FACE...

THIS POUNDING IN MY CHEST...
JUST WON'T STOP!

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AH... KAMIYA-SAN?!
I WANT TO FEEL MORE.
MORE.
...
I'LL GO CHECK UP ON HER.
Okay, but hurry up there!
LATELY, IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THIS.
WHITE PANTIES LOSES AND FRILLS CHASES AFTER HER.

AH...
HUH? SHE'S NOT HERE.
SHE MUST HAVE GONE THERE TODAY
MORE.
I WANT TO FEEL MY HEART BEATING.
SOB
SOB
SOB
TOILET
SO I'M THE SORT OF PERSON WHO CAN GET THIS EXCITED FROM SEEING A-CHAN'S CRYING FACE.
I HAD NO IDEA..
YEAH. HEARING HER WEEPING VOICE HERE ISN'T BAD EITHER.
MY HEART'S ABOUT TO BURST!
SOB
I'M SORRY, A-CHAN.
SOB
SOB
SOB

KUMAMI IS
A VERY BAD GIRL.

MORE.
I NEED TO WORK HARDER,
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キュ!!
BECOME STRONGER,
ALL FOR THE SAKE OF
A-CHAN'S FANTASTIC EXPRESSIONS.

AAH, TODAY'S TRAINING WAS SO TOUGH! I'M BEAT!
HMPF! YOU THINK THAT'S TOUGH? YOU HAVE TO HARDEN UP, THEN
I SEE YOU HALF-CRYING EVERY NOW AND THEN THOUGH, WHITE PANTIES.
I-I DON'T DO THAT!
OH YEAH YESTERDAY SHE WAS CRYING IN THE MIDDLE OF PRACTICE!
NO, I WASN'T!
E-EVEN IF I CRIED...!
I'D NEVER WHINE ABOUT IT LIKE HANABI DID!
WANT TO KNOW WHY?
'CAUSE I'M GOING TO BE NUMBER ONE!

I WAS ALREADY NUMBER ONE IN THE PING PONG CLASS I WENT TO.
THERE MIGHT BE A LOT OF OBSTACLES IN MY WAY NOW, BUT I'LL SHOW YOU. I'LL BE NUMBER ONE HERE TOO!
BRING IT ON, AGARI!
I'M NOT LOSING EITHER
UH-YOO!
HMPF!
THE SAME GOES FOR YOU, TSUKI-NOWA-SAN!
YOU MIGHT HAVE THE UPPER HAND NOW.
BUT SOME-DAY I'LL MOP THE FLOOR WITH YOU!
NUMBER ONE...

A-CHAN IS REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT IT... SHE'S PROBABLY DEVOTING HER WHOLE LIFE TO PING PONG.
Not bad
I'll mop the floor with you!
Stop interfering in...!
IF I WERE TO BECOME NUMBER ONE BEFORE HER...
WHAT KIND OF EXPRESSION WOULD SHE MAKE?
I MIGHT WANT TO SEE THAT
DE-STRUC-TION.

UH.. AH... THAT WAS...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR VOICE?
EH?!
TSUKI-NOWA-SAN?
HUH?
Kuma no Suke
I'VE BEEN HOOKED ON IT LATELY!
OH! R-RIGHT! THAT WAS VENTRI-LOQUY!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?!
...
AAH! THESE DAYS ARE A FREAKING BORE FEST!
Pff
OH NO... THAT MUST HAVE REALLY WEIRDED THEM OUT.
I JUST WANNA DESTROY IT ALL!

KUMA-MIN, THAT WAS AMA-ZING!
WHAT THE HELL... I CAN'T STOP LAUGHING.
Kyaa!
I DIDN'T SEE THAT COMING FROM FRILLS.
YOU'RE A FUNNY GIRL, TSUKINOWA-SAN.

!...!
HANABI, CUT IT OUT!
TRY SAYING "I'LL MOP THE FLOOR WITH YOU!"
HEY, CAN YOU SAY SOMETHING ELSE?
I'm showing
...
I'D NEVER SEEN HER LIKE THAT OUTSIDE OF PING PONG.
SO THAT'S HOW SHE LAUGHS.
A-CHAN...
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ドキ

LAUGHTER,
EMBARRASSMENT,
ANGER,
SHE HAS SO MANY DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS.
>_<
A-CHAN...
I HAD NO IDEA BEING WITH A-CHAN COULD BE THIS FUN!

SOB
SOB
SOB
SOB
SOB
DO I STILL GET EXCITED OVER SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
SOB
BUT WHY, DESPITE ALL THAT,
BEEP
HANABI WANTS ORANGE JUICE,
CLANK
MUNE-MUNE-SENPAI, MILK.
WHAT ARE YOU HAVING, TSUKI-NOWA-SAN?
SO?
ONE FOR EVERYBODY ON THE TEAM... THAT'S A LOT OF DRINKS.
...
EH?

JUICE, PERHAPS...?
I'LL DRINK ANYTHING. YOU CAN CHOOSE FOR ME, KAMIYA-SAN.
WHAT? HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO CHOOSE YOUR DRINK?
EH? I MEAN, I'LL DRINK ANYTHING, SO...
I THOUGHT I'D JUST LET YOU PICK FOR ME
LISTEN HERE,
I'M ASKING YOU WHAT YOU WANT.
M-ME?
YOU'RE ASKING ME WHAT I WANT?
YES, WHY?
!!

I SEE, A-CHAN.
YOU...
KUMAMI,
I GOT YOU A PRESENT!
YOU'RE REALLY...
THINKING OF ME TOO.
EH? WHAT'S WRONG?
DOES IT HURT SOME-WHERE? ARE YOU OKAY?!
I'M THE WORST.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I THOUGHT ABOUT DESTROYING THIS WONDERFUL PERSON WHO'S BEEN WATCHING OVER ME.
NO I'M OKAY
Here
THANKS, A-CHAN.
A-CHAN?!
AH!

...
YOU... DON'T LIKE IT?
PLEASE DON'T READ TOO MUCH INTO IT...
I WANT US TO GET ALONG, SO I THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD TRY CALLING YOU BY SOMETHING LESS FORMAL!
AH... NO, I MEAN... UM...
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WHAT-EVER, DO AS YOU LIKE...
WHA-
...
9
11

FROM THAT DAY ON,
I STARTED GOING EASY ON MY OPPONENTS.
ALL FOR THE SAKE OF
A-CHAN'S FANTASTIC EXPRES-SIONS
AGARI DEFEATED KUMAMI FOR THE FIRST TIME!
LOOK! KUMAMI IS DRENCHED IN SWEAT!
SHE MUST HAVE REALLY PUSHED HERSELF TO THE LIMIT!
THAT WAS A REALLY CLOSE MATCH, HUH?
E HE HE...
OF COURSE...

POWERFUL BREASTS
SUPER STRONG
STRONG
IF I GO TOO EASY ON HER, THEY'LL SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME.
A-CHAN ASIDE, I'M ALSO SURROUNDED BY GOOD PLAYERS.
BUT...
THAT'S OKAY.
IS WHAT'S REALLY HARD.
KEEPING MY STRENGTH AT JUST THE RIGHT LEVEL
I NEVER REALLY CARED FOR TABLE TENNIS ANYWAY.
...
GRIP
IS ALL THE HAPPINESS I NEED.
JUST SEEING A-CHAN'S SMILE

LITTLE BY LITTLE,
LITTLE BY LITTLE,
9
11
NEVER LETTING HER FIND O..IT,
ITCH
ITCH

I STARTED TO LET A-CHAN DEFEAT ME.

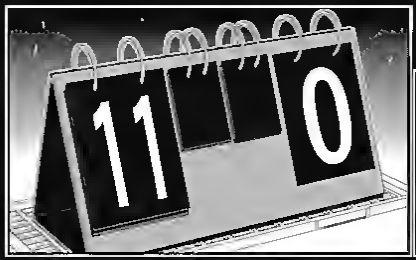
WITH THIS MATCH, YOU GUYS ARE TIED WITH 10 WINS AND 10 LOSSES EACH!
7
11
THE WINNER TODAY IS AGARI, AGAIN!
SHE'S BEEN ON A ROLL LATELY!
...
...
KUMAMI ?!
UM... I NEED TO GO THE TOILET. BE RIGHT BACK.
I DIDN'T REALLY CARE ABOUT TABLE TENNIS.
TOILET
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

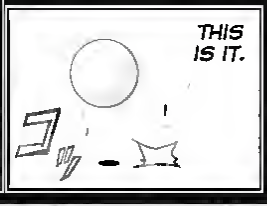
MY WHOLE BODY'S ACHING...
THIS ITCHING WON'T STOP.
AT SOME POINT,
TABLE TENNIS HAD BECOME A BIG PART OF ME.
I'M JUST HOLDING BACK MY STRENGTH ...
I DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD BE THIS AGONIZING.

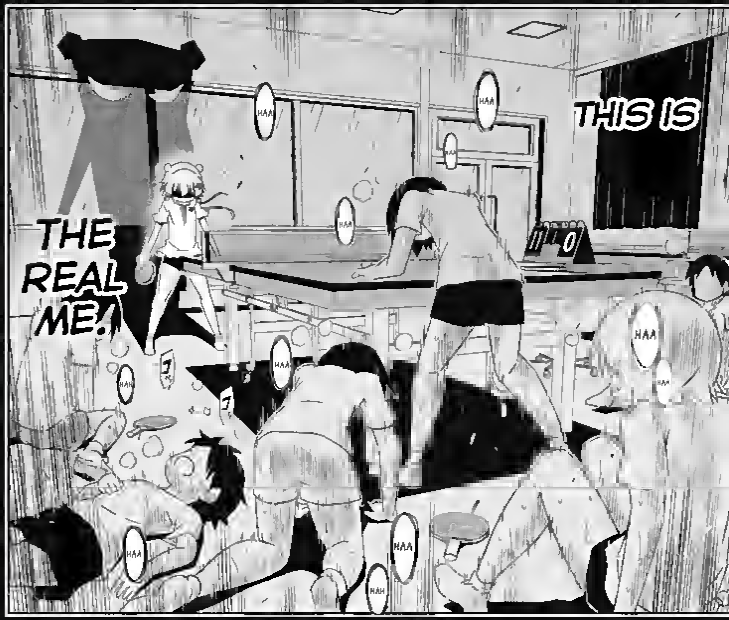
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.
THIS IS TOO MUCH.
THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO KNOW ME AT THE TABLE TENNIS HALL I USED TO GO TO
IF I'M GOING TO GO ALL OUT, I'D RATHER DO IT SOMEWHERE ELSE
TABLE TENNIS Queen
IN ORDER TO WASH AWAY ALL OF THOSE PENT UP FEELINGS,
I SECRETLY WENT TO THE TABLE TENNIS HALL IN THE NEIGHBORING TOWN
ディン

OH? A NEW MEMBER?
HOW SKILLED ARE YOU ALREADY?
I THINK I'M PRETTY GOOD.
I'M PROBABLY
BETTER THAN EVERYONE ELSE HERE.

YES.






THIS IS
THE REAL ME!
HAA
HAA
HAA

IT FELT AS IF MY PROBLEMS WERE BEING CARRIED AWAY AS I DEFEATED EVERYBODY THERE
HE
HE
HE
HE
HE
I WAS IMMERSING MYSELF IN ALL OF THAT SATIS-FACTION,
WHEN A BEAUTIFUL BLOND HAIRED GIRL APPEARED BEFORE ME.
MY, MY.

IT SEEMS WE'VE BEEN VISITED BY QUITE A TROUBLE-MAKER TODAY.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
CHARM-ING LADY WITH THE BEAR.
ア。

WOULD YOU MIND...
PLAYING AGAINST ME NEXT?
THAT WAS
ME AND CAPTAIN KOHI-ME'S
FIRST MEETING.

DRESS HANKO